



Natural Resources Conservation Service
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USDA Provides Up To \$1 Million in Conservation Partnership Initiative Grants

Lakewood, CO – The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) recently announced that \$1 million is available through their Conservation Partnership Initiative (CPI) grants Program for state and local governments, tribes and nongovernmental organizations that have a history of working with agricultural producers. **Applications must be received in the NRCS State Office in the State where the proposed project is located by 5 p.m. (local time) on Thursday, February 17, 2005.**

The Conservation Partnership Initiative (CPI) is a voluntary program established to foster conservation partnerships that focus technical and financial resources on conservation priorities in watersheds.

“Many of the critical natural resource concerns facing the agriculture and the environment community require solutions that look beyond the borders of individual farms and ranches as well as the common ways our natural resource conservation programs are implemented,” states Allen Green, NRCS State Conservationist, Lakewood, CO. *“Changes in land use, industry structure, and geographic concentration have led to environmental degradation in some locations that may best be addressed on a watershed or regional scale. CPI was established to encourage the formation of partnerships to devise and implement watershed or regional solutions to pressing natural resource priorities associated with agriculture and rural settings.”*

Applications for 2005 funding must address at least one of the five CPI conservation priorities which include: Terrestrial and aquatic wildlife habitat, Invasive species, Agricultural air quality, Livestock nutrient management, and Minor/specialty crop pest management.

In addition, applications must describe projects that are consistent with the following four CPI objectives. CPI projects must encourage: 1) Producers to cooperate in project planning and the establishment of project goals, as well as the installation and maintenance of conservation practices that affect multiple agricultural operations; 2) Producers to share information and technical and financial resources; 3) Cumulative and demonstrable conservation benefits in geographic areas; and 4) The development and demonstration of innovative conservation methods.

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Applicants in Colorado must submit proposals to the Colorado NRCS State Office in Lakewood by **Thursday, February 17, 2005** for evaluation. Applicants may request up to \$200,000 (but not less than \$50,000). A 1:1 match using non-NRCS funding is required and up to 100 percent of the match may come from in-kind contributions. **Interested parties may send applications to USDA NRCS c/o Allen Green, NRCS State Conservationist, 655 Parfet Street, RM E200C, Lakewood, CO 80215.** The state selections will be forwarded to the NRCS national office for further review and final award determinations.

Applications are solicited from entities that would coordinate a CPI project, including State and local governments and agencies; Indian Tribes; and non-governmental organizations that have a history of working with agricultural producers. The initiative may be implemented and applications accepted from all 50 States, the Caribbean Area (Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands), and the Pacific Basin Area (Guam, American Samoa, and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands).

Each year, NRCS intends to select for one of the CPI awards a proposal that addresses at least one of the CPI conservation priorities as it impacts limited resource or beginning farmers and ranchers, or Tribes. In the event that no proposal of this type merits selection, the award will be given to a proposal from the general pool of applicants.

For additional information on CPI, including the RFP, please visit www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/cpi or contact Dennis Alexander, NRCS Assistant State Conservationist, Lakewood, Colorado at 720-544-2805

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